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INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1205
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1380
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [ET](#) [ER](#)
SUBJECT: OLF CHAIRMAN SPEAKS ON ENDF AND RECENT OROMO
DEFLECTIONS

REF: ADDIS ABABA 2572

Classified By: CDA Jennifer McIntyre for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) On September 22, Poloff met with Oromo Liberation Front(OLF) Chairman Daoud Ibsa in Asmara. Daoud provided further insight into the state of affairs of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and the OLF efforts in Ethiopia, following the September defections of two high level ENDF generals to the OLF in Eritrea. The defections, Daoud proffered, were indicative of the larger disaffection of ethnic Oromo,s in the ENDF and divisions within the ENDF along political lines. Furthermore, according to him, both the Oromo rank and file and the officers, resent the observed corruption of the Tigrayan officers.

12. (C) The ENDF, Daoud claimed, presently is engaged in a Soviet style purge, or self-criticism process, with the aim of having the ethnic Oromo members of the military incriminate themselves. According to him, the ENDF sponsors mandatory meetings for soldiers, encouraging soldiers to speak openly about their ideas and complaints. Anyone who speaks out against the government or admits to an Oromo-ethnic alliance is then treated as a criminal within the ENDF. Daoud claims that all Oromo members of the ENDF, officers and enlisted, are under suspicion and arrests are on the rise. As an example of inter-ethnic tensions, he shared one story of after the suspected murder of an Oromo soldier, a Tigrayan soldier turned up dead the next day in retaliation.

13. (C) Daoud claimed that the OLF was aware of the September defections of Brigadier General Kemal Gelchu and Brigadier General Hailu Gonfa long before they occurred, insinuating the OLF was involved in their coordination. He confirmed that 250-300 soldiers with their weapons, but no artillery, came across with General Kemal in August. When pressed as to where the Generals were residing in Eritrea, he admitted they were no longer in Asmara. From his lack of response to whether they were training near Keren, Poloff inferred that they are likely no longer there, either. Daoud further alleged that some members of the 10th division who remained in Ethiopia continue to be loyal to General Kemal, despite their being under increased scrutiny or incarcerated by ENDF Tigrinya officers.

14. (C) Comment: Daoud maintains a legal residency in Asmara

and the GSE continues to support him and the OLF, although the full extent of GSE support is unknown. Daoud claims material support is limited by virtue of geographic distances between Oromiya and Eritrea. As the Chairman of the OLF, Dauod was permitted to meet with the defecting generals and their troops. His perspective on the situation within the ENDF echoes reftel report. As for Eritrea,s support of the OLF, as long as the OLF continues to advocate for the overthrow of the TPLF, the Eritreans will lend assistance to support this end. End Comment.
MCINTYRE